



Arizona Early Intervention Program

AzEIP Technical Assistance Bulletin # 4

“When to Close a Referral”

Introduction:

Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (I.D.E.A.) requires States to implement a comprehensive child find system to ensure that all infants and toddlers in the State who are eligible for services under this part are identified, located, and evaluated.

Background:

Children are referred to AzEIP from many sources, including doctors, social service agencies, schools, early childhood care and education programs, and concerned family members. Families are not always aware that a referral has been made, and may not be interested in accessing early intervention services. In addition, referral sources do not always have the family's most current contact information.

Therefore, there are times when the family cannot be located, or does not respond to contacts made and offers to provide evaluation.

Documentation:

Attempts to contact the family after the referral has been received must be documented in the child's record. This documentation must include the date, time, method, and result of the contact attempt. It is very important that this data be accurately entered. A referral that is left open indefinitely will be counted as exceeding the 45 day timeline and will have a negative impact on AzEIP's timeline data that is reported to OSEP. If all attempts at contact fail, then the referral must be closed in AzEIP's ACTS, or other child tracking system being utilized, as “unable to contact”, or “parent not interested”, as appropriate. After making adequate efforts to locate and contact the family, the referral can be closed prior to the 46th day after referral.

Guidance for Responding to a New Referral

Within 2 days of referral: Attempt to contact family by phone.

Week 2-3: If the first attempt to reach the family by phone is unsuccessful, make two additional attempts to contact the family by phone during weeks 2 and 3. Contact attempts should be made on different days of the week, and at different times of the day.

If phone attempts are unsuccessful, contact the referral source (if not the family) for assistance with locating the family. Ask whether the family agreed to the referral, and whether the referral source has additional contact information. If the referral source provides new information or assistance in contacting the family, attempt to contact the family again.

Week 4: If still unable to contact the family, send a letter informing them that a referral has been made, asking if the family is interested in finding out about early intervention, and asking the family to contact the program within 10 days. Enclose the AzEIP brochure with the letter to the family.

Week 6: If there has been no response to attempts to contact the family, close the referral as “Unable to Contact.” If initially able to contact the family, but unable to proceed with evaluations, etc because the family cannot be located, or if the family cancels appointments and does not wish to reschedule, then the referral can be closed as “Parent not interested.” **However, if the family continues to express interest in receiving services from AzEIP, then the referral must be kept open. This applies whether the family has cancelled appointments or asked to delay evaluations due to vacation, illness, etc. In this case, the reason for the timeline delay can be documented as “Family”.**

If at any time the family indicates that they are not interested in receiving services from AzEIP, then the referral can be closed at that time, as “Parent not interested.”